Testimony By The Honorable Wilson S Livingood

Sergeant at Arms of the House

Mr.
Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before
you today to discuss the Information Technology Assessment and Ten Year
Vision for IT in the House. I am here to provide you with my thoughts
on the impact of this ten year vision as it relates to the functions of
the Office of the Sergeant at Arms.

My staff and I were active participants throughout this study,
providing input for the Current State Report through interviews with
personnel from Gartner and CMF. In addition, my staff participated in
the focus groups as part of the "To-Be" Vision and IT Decision Making
Workshops. We found the methodology of the study to be thorough and
complete. Gartner and CMF included all pertinent offices within the
House that support service operations, and also acquired feedback from
the many stakeholders that participate in transmitting data through the
House.

The use of information technology within the Office of the Sergeant
at Arms is mainly focused on supporting the security functions of the
House. The production of identification badges, distribution and
inventory control of parking permits, wireless communications inside
and around the House Chamber and during special and emergency events
are all areas which rely on IT infrastructure for consistent and
reliable operation.

There are a number of instances where centralizing and standardizing
the information technology functions and equipment in the House could
be useful to my office.

As a member of the Capitol Police Board, I have seen the impact of information technology on the physical security systems of the Capitol campus. The ability of autonomous systems to share information is dependent on compatible hardware and/or software, in addition to the proper information security controls to ensure the data is not compromised. One example of this is communications during emergency events, both among the office staff and with outside offices and agencies, which relies on various forms of wireless communications - from Blackberry devices to two-way radios to cellular devices. The ability to utilize these forms of communication to notify Members of an emergency situation, and also to provide accountability of Members during these events, could be more efficiently implemented in a centralized IT environment using systems that are interoperable.

Another area that could be beneficial to House operations is the idea of a federal identification badge. Currently the agencies of the Executive Branch of the government, pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (known as HSPD-12) are implementing an identification badge that will be valid across all agencies using digital authentication. Although current business processes in the House do not provide an effective means of implementing all of the requirements of HSPD-12, my office, in conjunction with the USCP, has been reviewing these standards to determine if certain portions of the directive could be more easily achieved should the IT processes change.

Another area of interest I have is exploring the use of so-called "smart cards" to blend the ideas of physical security and access security. Smart cards are ID badges with computer chips built in to store large amounts of data. These cards could be used to provide access to secure areas of the Capitol Complex and also as a means of authentication for House staff to access their computer accounts and email. To implement this vision however, the physical security access control systems (managed by the USCP), the active directory authentication system (managed by HIR), and possibly the ID Badging system (managed by ID Services) would have to share information across various platforms. Centralization and standardization of information systems would be necessary to implement a system such as this.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for requesting my thoughts on this vision and I hope that I have been able to share some insight into the effect of standardization and centralization of IT services in the House on the operations of my office.